IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF DELAWARE

CHRISTINA LIEF F/B/O TASHA LIEF,)
Plaintiff,)
Vs.) Civil Action No
CAPE HENLOPEN SCHOOL DISTRICT and the DELAWARE DEPARTMENT of))
EDUCATION,)
Defendants)

NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Defendants the Cape Henlopen School District (hereinafter, "the District" and the State of Delaware Department of Education (hereinafter, "the Department"), collectively, hereinafter, the "Defendants", by and through their undersigned counsel, hereby give notice that this matter has been removed, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1446, to the United States District Court for the District of Delaware. The grounds for the removal are as follows:

- 1. Plaintiff Christina Lief ("Plaintiff") commenced this action, entitled Christina Lief

 F/B/O/ Tasha Lief v Cape Henlopen School District and Department of Education- State of

 Delaware, Case No 06-10541 in the Family Court of the State of Delaware in and for Sussex

 County On information and belief, the Complaint (styled as a "Petition- Appeal Hearing

 Decision and Order") was filed on or about April 4, 2006.
- 2. In her Complaint, Plaintiff appeals an adverse decision by a due process hearing panel and appears to allege that the Defendants violated the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA"), 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq., the Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. § 794 ("Section 504"), 42 U.S.C. § 1983, 14 Del. C. § 3122, and 14 Del. C. § 3142. Plaintiff further alleges that the Hearing Decision and Order by reversed and that she is entitled to

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"reimbursement for compensatory education, tuition reimbursement for private placement, an award of all fees, cost[s] and expenses (including reasonable counsel fees) associated with the Hearing Panel and Appeal process, together with such other relief as this Honorable Court deems just and equitable in the case at bar."

- The Court has original jurisdiction to adjudicate the above-referenced dispute on the basis of 20 U.S.C. § 1415(i)(2)(A) which provides that "any party aggrieved by the findings and decision made under this subsection, shall have the right to bring a civil action with respect to the complaint presented pursuant to this section, which action may be brought in any State court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States, without regard to the amount in controversy." This case is, therefore, removable to this Count under 28 U.S.C. §1441(b)
- 4. To the extent Plaintiff is asserting any claims under the Delaware state special education statutes (Title 14, Chapter 31 of the Delaware Code), this Court has supplemental jurisdiction over said claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367
- 5. This Notice of Removal is being filed within 30 days of the Defendants' receipt of the Complaint and is hereby timely filed under 28 U.S.C. § 1446(b).
- 6 Copies of the Summons and Complaint served upon Defendants, are attached hereto.
- 7 Defendants have filed a true and correct copy of the Notice of Removal with the Family Court of the State of Delaware in and for Sussex County, as required by law. A copy of that Notice is attached hereto

WHEREFORE, Defendants respectfully request that this action now pending against them in the Family Court of the State of Delaware in and for Sussex County, be removed

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therefrom to this Court and that this action be placed upon the docket of this Court for further proceedings, as though this action originally had been instituted in this Court

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG CONAWAY STARGATT/& TAYLOR, LLP

Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399)

Michael P. Stafford, Esquire (No. 4461)

The Brandywine Building 1000 West Street, 17th Floor

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(302) 571-6623; 571-6553

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Attorneys for Defendant Cape Henlopen School District

Craig Rafitzgerald, Esquire (No. 3730)

Deputy Attorney General Civil Division- Kent County 102 West Water Street

Dover, Delaware 19904

Telephone: (302) 739-7641 ext 303

Facsimile: (302) 739-7652

Email: craig fitzgerald@state.de.us

Attorney for Defendant Delaware Department of Education

Dated: April <u>**37**</u>, 2006

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Michael P. Stafford, certify that on April 37, 2006. I caused a copy of the foregoing Defendants' Notice of Removal, along with related documents and this certificate of service, to be served by hand-delivery on the following counsel of record:

> Bruce A. Rogers, Esq. BRUCE A. ROGER & ASSOCIATES 16 South Front Street Georgetown, Delaware 19947

> > YOUNG CONAWAY STARGATT & TAYLOR, LLP

Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399) Michael P Stafford, Esquire (No. 4461)

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Email: sholt@yest.com

mstafford@yest.com

Dated: April 27, 2006

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The Family Court of the State of Delaware

In and For [] New Castle [] Kent X Sussex County
PETITION - APPEAL HEARING DECISION AND ORDER

PETITIONER

Christina Lief F/B/O Tasha Lief 251 Fennel Dun Clrcle Billmore, NC 28715-8911 Attorney: Bruce A. Rogers, Esquire RESPONDENTS

File Number(s)

Cape Henlopen School District 1270 Kings Highway

Lewes, DE 19958

Petition Number(s)

Attorney: David Williams, Esquire

Department of Education - State of Delaware

401 Federal Street, Suite 2

Dover, DE 19901

Attorney: Louann Vari, Esquire

Petitioner alleges the following:

1. IDEA Section 504, CFR 300.125 and 14 Del.C. Section 3122 were improperly applied during the hearing, thereby denying the parent due process.

2. The hearing panel failed to apply the relevant and applicable law in the area (case law, statutes and decisions), thereby committing legal error.

3. The hearing panel erred in their treatment of the parent's position on the matter in violation of 14 Del.C. Section 3142.

4. The hearing panel repeatedly inferred facts which were not in evidence through documents or witnesses, thereby creating legal error and denying the parent due process.

5. The transcript is replete with issues of procedural and substantive due process violations. The panel was openly hostile to the parent. The panel was overly solicitous of the District (by way of example and not by way of limitation, the panel recommended a specific motion be filled, granted time for the motion to be filled and announced the likely decision if the motion were to be filled, to the prejudice of parent). The decision of the panel, based upon this hostile and prejudicial panel, violates the procedural and substantive due process rights of parent and student herein.

6. FAPE entitles the student to receive special education and related services designed to meet her specific needs. The District failed to do so (ex: Open Court Remediation) and the panel failed to recognize this error.

7. IDEA requires the child and parent to receive a fair due process hearing with impartial and knowledgeable panel members. Such was not the case here. For example, and not by way of limitation, the Panel chair was openly hostile to parent and her counsel and panel member Werner was not an impartial member.

8. The panel failed to recognize the illegal disclosure of confidential information regarding the student to a Union representative and others not part of the IEP process and the resulting violation of student's rights in the decision. This violation has been found to exist and sanctioned by the Department of Education, however, the panel falled to address this serious violation.

 The panel violated the civil rights of the student in the manner in which the hearing was conducted and in the clearly erroneous decision entered. IDEA. 20 USC 1400.

10. Parent was denied access to all of the student's records within the control of the District. These records were sanitized by the counsel for the District and several documents were not produced despite the request of the parent to do so. It was as if an entire file of documents was missing from the school and district records.

11. The panel decision and conduct of the hearing gives rise to a violation of student's rights and gives rise to a separate cause of action pursuant to 42 USC Section 1983.

- Case 1:06-cv-00274-GMS
- 12. District counsel stated on the record that she "knew parent was going to file" for due process and then proceeded to take control and custody of the student's records without following proper procedures. As a result, parent was denied access to the entire student file.
- 13. The panel improperly shifted the burden of proof and the burden of persuasion to the parent/child.
- The panel improperly substituted its judgment and opinion for the appropriate educational 14. determinations as to methodologies employed in the education of student.
- The panel improperly defined FAPE and could not, therefore, properly determine if the student had received FAPE.
- The panel improperly decided upon the evaluations of the student in the case. The only 16. evaluations of the student were provided by the parent and should have been the ones which governed the development of the IEP and the determination of FAPE. The panel failed to properly consider the weight of these evaluations.
- The panel improperly defined "fluency" and improperly applied it to the case at bar. 17.
- The panel relied upon information which was not properly admitted, not otherwise admissible 18. and not subject to cross examination by the parent/counsel.
- The panel failed to consider the interpretation of the Kennedy-Kreiger reports, relying instead 19. upon on non-expert, unqualified testimony from District employees.
- The panel erroneously ignored the diagnosis of the student as dyslexic, thereby ignoring certain procedural and substantive educational safeguards for the student.
- The panel falled to consider the fact that the IEPs were often developed by the District before the parent was able, asked or permitted to participate.
- 22. Panel member Werner was not an impartial member of the panel as required by statute.
- The panel failed to properly qualify parent's expert witness as such, despite clear credentials, experience and prior testimony to the contrary. The panel improperly ignored this testimony.
- 24. The panel reliance upon the testimony of Mr. Jefferson was in error as he was not qualified to testify.
- The panel reliance upon the testimony of Ms. Joynes was in error as she testified based upon 25. hearsay evidence which was admitted during the District's case but excluded during the parent's cross examination.
- The panel falled to consider the diagnosis of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the 26. fact that student was punished for behaviors which were a part of her disability.
- Panel member Werner actually joked about the diagnosis of student's PTSD during the 27. hearing process.

Petitioner seeks the following relief:

The Petitioner asks this court to reverse the Hearing Decision and Order of the panel dated January 31, 2006, to grant reimbursement for compensatory education, tuition reimbursement for private placement, an award of all fees, cost and expenses (including reasonable counsel fees) associated with the Hearing Panel and Appeal process, together with such other relief as this Honorable Court deems just and equitable in the case at bar.

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED Before me this date.

16 S. Front Street Georgetown, DE 19947 Address

Atterney

ATTORNEY (S)

CERTIFIED MAIL Form 498

STATE OF DELAWARE FAMILY COURT: SUSSEX COUNTY 22 THE CIRCLE, GEORGETOWN DE 19947 CIVIL SUMMONS APPEAL OF DUE PROCESS

LIEF, CHRISTINA

FILE: CS06-01689

CASE: 06-10541

OFFITIONER (S)

CAPE HENLOPEN HIGH SCHOOL WILLIAMS, DAVID H. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VARI, LOUANN J. ATTORNEY (E) RESPONDENT(S)

TO: CAPE HENLOPEN HIGH SCHOOL 1270 KINGS HIGHWAY LEWES DE 19958

ATTENTION: CAPE HENLOPEN HIGH SCHOOL AND DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION You have been named as the respondent in the attached pleading which has been filed in Family Court. Please read the following statements carefully:

- 1. You are required by Family Court Civil Rules to file an Answer within twenty (20) days of the receipt of this pleading. Failure to file an answer may result in the entry of a default judgment against you.
- 2. Your Answer must contain responses to each of the allegations and in the same order as they appear on the pleading.
- 3. You are required to serve the petitioner's attorney or the petitioner, if not represented, with a copy of your Answer.
- 4. You will receive a written notice advising you of the date and time you are to appear in Family Court once you have filed your Answer.
- 5. You must report any change of address to the Court. Failure to report a change of address, or to appear when scheduled, may result in a default judgment or the issuance of a capias for your arrest.
- If the attached pleading involves CUSTODY or VISITATION, you will also find the Preliminary Injunction Order in Custody or Visitation which is issued against both parties to the action.

WITNESS THE JUDGES of the Family Court of the State of Delaware, this date

04/07/2006 CINDY LECATES Date Issued Clerk of Court

CFCCSOL 04/07/2006

RECEIVED APR 1 1 2006

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE IN AND FOR SUSSEX COUNTY

Christina Lief F/B/O Tasha Lief,

FILE NO.:

Petitioner.

PETITION NO.:

٧.

Cape Henlopen School District

Department of Education - State of DE:

Respondents.

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

BE IT REMBERED, that on this 304h day of March, 2006, personally appeared before me, the Subscriber, a Notary Public for the State and County aforesaid, Fred Dobronz, a secretary for the law firm of BRUCE A. ROGERS, P.A., ATTORNEY AT LAW, Georgetown, Delaware, and being by me duly sworn according to law, deposes and say that on the __ day of March, 2006, he forwarded two copies of an ENTRY OF APPEARANCE, in the above captioned case, via United States mail, postage prepaid to:

> David Williams, Esquire Morris James Hithens & Williams LLP 222 Delaware Avenue, 10th Floor PO Box 2306 Wilmington, DE 19899-2306

Louann Vari, Esquire Department of Justice 102 West Water Street Dover, DE 19904-6750

FRED DOBRONZ

SWORN TO AND SUBSCRIBED before me the day, month and year aforesaid.

NOTARAWANINICAREY NOTARY PUBLIC

STATE OF DELWARE

MY COMMISSION EXPIRES 2/11/08

IN THE FAMILY COURT OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE IN AND FOR SUSSEX COUNTY

CHRISTINA LIEF F/B/O TASHA LIEF,)
Petitioner,	
Vs.) Civil Action No. <u>06-10541</u>
CAPE HENLOPEN SCHOOL DISTRICT and the DELAWARE DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION,)))
Respondents)

NOTICE OF FILING NOTICE OF REMOVAL

Karen Gerardi, Civil Clerk of the Court TO: 22 The Circle Georgetown, DE 19947

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Respondents Cape Henlopen School District and Department of Education- State of Delaware, have removed the above-styled action from the Family Court of the State of Delaware in and for Sussex County, in which it was initially filed, to the United States District Court for the District of Delaware.

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Attached hereto, and made a part hereof, is a copy of the Notice of Removal that has been filed in the United States District Court for the District of Delaware.

Respectfully submitted,

YOUNG CONAWAY STARGATT & TAYLOR, LLP

Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399)

Michael P. Stafford, Esquire (No. 4461)

The Brandywine Building 1000 West Street, 17th Floor

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(302) 739-7652 Facsimile:

craig fitzgerald@state de us Email:

Attorney for Respondent Delaware Department of Education

Dated: April 27, 2006

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Michael P. Stafford, Esquire, hereby certify that the foregoing Respondents' Notice of Filing Notice of Removal, along with related attachments, and this certificate of service, was served on April 37, 2006, by hand delivery on the following Petitioner's counsel of record:

> Bruce A. Rogers, Esq. BRUCE A. ROGER & ASSOCIATES 16 South Front Street Georgetown, Delaware 19947

> > Scott A. Holt, Esquire (No. 3399)

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Dated: April 27, 2006

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SJS 44 (Rev 11/04)

CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE REVERSE OF THE FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS			
Christina Lief F/B/O Tasha Lief			Cape Henlopen School District and the Delaware Department of Education			
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Buncombe, NC			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Sussex		Sussex	
(E:	CCEPT IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES)			(IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES	ONLY)	
			NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES. USE THE LOCATION OF THE LAND INVOLVED			
(c) Attorney's (Firm Name,	Address, and Telephone Number)		Attorneys (If Known)			
Bruce A. Rogers, Esques BRUCE A. ROGER & ASSOCIATES	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		Machael B Glafford, Euqura Young Consway Statgart & Taylo: LLP			
Under Anders Anders Control ES The Bondywine Budding 115 South Front Street Georgebon, Disbanes 19947			P. O. Box 393 Wilmington, DE 19809			
II. BASIS OF JURISDICTION (Place an "X" in One Box Only) III. CITIZENSHIP OF PRINCIPAL PARTIES(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintiff						
			(For Diversity Cases Only) and One Box for Defendant) PTF DEF PTF DEF			
Plaintiff			Citizen of This State			
🗇 2 U.S. Government	☐ 4 Diversity	Citizo	en of Another State	2	Principal Place 🗍 5 🗍 5	
Defendant	(Indicate Citizenship of Parties in Ite	m III)		of Business In a	Another State	
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IV. NATURE OF SUIT	(Place an 'X' in One Box Only) TORTS	FOR	FEITURE/PENALTY	BANKRUPTCY	OTHER STATUTES	
☐ 110 Insurance	PERSONAL INJURY PERSONAL		i 10 Agriculture	☐ 422 Appeal 28 USC 158	3 400 State Reapportionment	
120 Marine	310 Airplane 🔲 362 Persona	al Injury - 🔲 6	i20 Other Food & Drug	☐ 423 Withdrawal	CJ 410 Antitrust	
☐ 130 Miller Act ☐ 140 Negotiable Instrument	☐ 315 Airplane Product Med. Ma Liability ☐ 365 Persona.		625 Drug Related Seizure of Property 21 USC 881	28 USC 157	430 Banks and Banking 450 Commerce	
☐ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment	☐ 320 Assault, Libel & Product I Slander ☐ 368 Asbesto		30 Liquor Laws 40 R.R. & Truck	PROPERTY RIGHTS 820 Copyrights	460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and	
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(Excl Veterans)	345 Marine Product 370 Other Fr	raud 🔲 6	90 Other		☐ 810 Selective Service	
☐ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits	Liability 371 Truth in 350 Motor Vehicle 380 Other Po		LABOR 10 Fair Labor Standards	SOCIAL SECURITY 861 HIA (1395ff)	S50 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange	
☐ 160 Stockholders' Suits ☐ 190 Other Contract	☐ 355 Motor Vehicle Property	Damage	Act	□ 862 Black Lung (923)	875 Customer Challenge	
195 Contract Product Liability	Product Liability 385 Property 360 Other Personal Product I		20 Labor/Mgmt Relations 30 Labor/Mgmt Reporting	☐ 863 DIWC/DIWW (405(g)) ☐ 864 SSID Title XVI	12 USC 3410 50 890 Other Statutory Actions	
☐ 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY	Injury CIVIL RIGHTS PRISONER PI	ETITIONS 7	& Disclosure Act 40 Railway Labor Act	☐ 865 RSI (405(g)) FEDERAL TAX SUITS	☐ 891 Agricultural Acts ☐ 892 Economic Stabilization Act	
☐ 210 Land Condemnation	☐ 441 Voting ☐ 510 Motions		90 Other Labor Litigation	☐ 870 Taxes (U.S. Plaintiff	☐ 893 Environmental Matters	
220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment	☐ 442 Employment Sentence ☐ 443 Housing/ Habeas Cor	3	91 Empl Ret Inc Security Act	or Defendant) 871 IRS—Third Party	☐ 894 Energy Allocation Act ☐ 895 Freedom of Information	
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VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	Cite the U.S. Civil Statute under whice 28 U.S.C 1441 Brief description of cause:	th you are filing (Do not cite jurisdictions	al statutes unless diversity):		
		based on federal q	juestion			
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS A UNDER F.R.C P. 23	CHECK IF THIS IS A CLASS ACTION DEMAND S CHECK YES only if demanded in complaint:				
VIII. RELATED CASI IF ANY	C(S) (See instructions): JUDGE			DOCKET NUMBER		
DATE SIGNATURE OF ATTORNEY OF RECORD						
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FOR OFFICE USE ONLY						
RECEIPT #A	MOUNT	G IFP	JUDGE	MAG JUD	OGE	